



Congressman

**Wally
Herger**

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Dear Friends:

Much has been accomplished this year in Congress. Providing Americans tax relief moved to the forefront when the House of Representatives passed a \$792 billion package designed to refund Americans' tax overpayments. Regrettably, the President chose to veto the tax relief bill. However, Congress remains committed to addressing tax relief next year.



**California's
Congressional
District**

Social Security was protected by the overwhelming passage of H.R. 1249, The Social Security and Medicare Safe Deposit Box Act of 1999, and H.Res. 306, measures I introduced to ensure, for the first time, Social Security surpluses won't be raided for unrelated spending. The national public debt was paid down by \$88 billion this year, and next year we are slated to pay down \$131 billion.

Health care improvement became the focus when the House passed a measure that provides self-employed individuals a 100 percent deduction for health insurance and long-term care premiums. The measure also allows an additional exemption—currently \$2,750—for individuals who care for elderly family members at home. This legislation is awaiting final consideration.

Improving education was the centerpiece of House-passed legislation that gives teachers, school districts, and states more flexibility in using funds for education needs. The measure also encourages states to develop tenure reform and bonus pay for teachers in high-need areas.

Our armed forces were bolstered after years of national defense cuts. These cuts occurred at a time when our armed forces were engaged in more than 45 conflicts. Our FY2000 National Defense bill increased military pay by 4.8% and enhanced benefits. It also improved the retirement system and updated recruitment and retention efforts.

Continuing the work to properly implement the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act has also been a priority this year. This summer a series of fires raged through Northern California, costing lives, property, and consuming more than 400,000 acres throughout the North State. These tragedies emphasized the importance of forest health and safety measures like the Quincy Library Group. I will continue to work on a bipartisan basis with members of the House, Senate, and the Clinton Administration, to ensure that forest health and fire reduction remains a top priority.

As Congress continues its work, I look forward to your input on issues of concern to Northern California. My website remains a popular way to follow Congress and legislation—it receives over 10,000 visits a month—and we will continue to update it. Our Web address is www.house.gov/herger.

Sincerely,